F Post 10/29/79

U.S. shelves request for King atonement

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Carter administration has quietly shelved a request that the government atone for FBI harassment of the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. by using public funds to carry on the work of the slain civil rights leader.

The proposal was presented to the Justice Department in October 1977 by former Attorney General Ramsey Clark and came to light last week in congressional testimony by King's widow, Coretta Scott King.

Both Clark and Mrs. King said in interviews that they believed the proposal was still under active consideration at the Justice Department.

However, former Attorney General Griffin Bell, who met with Clark on the subject in 1977, said the idea "never got off the ground." A department spokesman also said the proposal was no longer under consideration.

Clark, who was attorney general from 1967 to 1969, said he gave Bell a list of suggestions that called for the government to atone for the FBI's attempt to discredit King in the 1960s by establishing a program to "advance the cause of Dr. King."